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Report of the Trade and Development Board on its fifty-fifth executive session*

Geneva, 3 to 5 July and 15 October 2012

Introduction

1. The fifty-fifth executive session of the Trade and Development Board was held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 3 to 5 July and on 15 October 2012. In the course of the session, the Board held four plenary meetings. The first three plenary meetings were chaired by Mr. Mothae Anthony Maruping (Lesotho), President of the Board. The fourth plenary meeting, a resumed session of the Board, was chaired by Mr. Jüri Seilenthal (Estonia), who was elected President at the fifty-ninth annual session of the Board in September 2012.

I. Action by the Trade and Development Board

(Agenda item 2)

2. The Board took note of the report on the activities undertaken by UNCTAD in support of Africa.

(Agenda item 3 (a))

3. The Board approved the draft provisional agenda of the sixty-second session of the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget (see annex I) scheduled to take place from 3 to 5 September 2012. Background documents would be made available in accordance with the six-week rule.

* The present document is an advance version of the report of the Trade and Development Board on its fifty-fifth executive session, held at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 3 to 5 July and on 15 October 2012. It will appear in final form, together with the reports on the fifty-fourth executive session, the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth special sessions and the fifty-ninth session of the Board, as *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 15* (A/67/15).

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(Agenda item 3 (b))

4. At the first plenary meeting, the Board took note of the President's proposal that the extended Bureau continue the consultations on the topics and terms of reference of the expert meetings and that an agreement be reached concerning the agendas of the fourth sessions of the Commissions scheduled to take place in November 2012. Once approved by the Bureau, the topics and terms of reference for the expert meetings would be issued as a Board document.

5. At the fourth plenary meeting (resumed session), the Board approved the list of topics for the forthcoming sessions of the multi- and single-year expert meetings as follows:

(a) Multi-year expert meetings:

(i) Enhancing the enabling economic environment at all levels in support of inclusive and sustainable development;

(ii) Promoting economic integration and cooperation;

(iii) Trade, services and development;

(iv) Transport, trade logistics and trade facilitation;

(v) Commodities and development;

(vi) Investment, innovation and entrepreneurship for productive capacity-building and sustainable development;

(b) Single-year expert meetings (first round):

(i) Tourism's contribution to sustainable development;

(ii) Assessing the impact of public-private partnerships on trade and development in developing countries;

(c) Single-year expert meetings (second round):

(i) Social inclusion programmes and their impact on sustainable and inclusive development and growth;

(ii) The impact of remittances on development (approved ad referendum, by a date to be agreed before the end of 2012).

6. At that same meeting (resumed session), the member States asked the secretariat to prepare the terms of reference for the expert meetings to be submitted to the Bureau for consideration and approval.

7. At the fourth plenary meeting (resumed session), the Board adopted the substantive agenda items of the fifth sessions of the Commissions as follows:

(a) Investment Commission;

(i) Promoting entrepreneurship for productive capacity-building;

(ii) Investment, innovation and technology for development;

(b) Trade and Development Commission;

(i) Impact of trade on employment and poverty reduction;

(ii) Key trends in international transport and development implications for development.

(Agenda item 4)

8. The Board approved the applications of six non-governmental organizations seeking observer status: the International Actuarial Association, Bread for All, the Computer and Communications Industry Association, the International Network for Standardization of Higher Education Degrees, the Inter-American Transportation Chamber and the African Business Roundtable.

9. The Board took note that two non-governmental organizations holding observer status with UNCTAD, the International Federation of Agricultural Producers and 3D — Trade — Human Rights — Equitable Economy, had ceased operations in 2010.

10. The Board decided that the aforementioned changes would be reflected in the list of non-governmental organizations enjoying observer status with UNCTAD.

(Agenda item 5)

11. The Board approved the draft provisional agenda of the fifty-ninth session of the Board, to be held from 17-28 September 2012 (see annex II).

II. President's summary

A. Activities undertaken by UNCTAD in support of Africa

(Agenda item 2)

12. This item of the Executive Session was discussed in two parts. The morning session focused on the presentation of the report contained in document TD/B/EX(55)/2, Activities undertaken by UNCTAD in support of Africa. The afternoon session was devoted to a panel debate on the New Partnership for Africa's Development, NEPAD. Background document TD/B/EX(55)/3, The New Partnership for Africa's Development: Performance, Challenges and the Role of UNCTAD, served as a basis for the discussion.

13. Under this item, the following participants addressed the Executive Session: Mr. Mothae Anthony Maruping, President of the Trade and Development Board; Mr. Taffere Tesfachew and Mr. Janvier Nkurunziza, Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes; UNCTAD; and representatives of the following countries and groups of countries: Algeria, Angola, China, Ethiopia, the European Union, Indonesia, Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda and Zimbabwe.

14. The secretariat presented a report on activities undertaken in support of Africa and used this first Executive Session following the conclusion of UNCTAD XIII as an opportunity to briefly share its views on the implementation of the work programme on Africa, as provided for in the Doha Mandate. The secretariat said that UNCTAD would put greater emphasis on prioritization, focus and pragmatic approaches in resource use. Greater interdivisional collaboration would be encouraged in view of the limited resources available in individual divisions. Moreover, there would be more dissemination of UNCTAD's work on Africa, and evaluation of its impact would be improved, within the limits imposed by available resources.

15. During the debate that followed, several delegates expressed appreciation for the quality of UNCTAD's assistance to Africa in all three pillars: research and policy analysis, consensus-building and technical cooperation. One delegate called on UNCTAD to continue engaging in ahead-of-the curve and creative thinking on Africa's development, especially as the world moved into designing a post-2015 development framework. Further, the forthcoming fiftieth anniversary of UNCTAD could be a good opportunity for UNCTAD to present a major publication that would propose integrated policy options to development policy in the post-2015 period. One delegate expressed satisfaction that a number of issues raised by delegates at last year's session had been addressed in this year's report.

16. One participant suggested that UNCTAD should organize informal workshops and brainstorming sessions with member States in order to contribute to the post-2015 development agenda. In the African context, such discussions could explore how interregional mechanisms such as the New Asia-Africa Strategic Partnership could contribute to the overall development of the continent in the context of South-South Cooperation. There was a call for a strengthening of partnerships between UNCTAD and regional economic commissions and regional development banks by their participation in each other's intergovernmental machinery and joint publications, when appropriate.

17. One delegation called upon the secretariat to continue improving its annual presentation of the report on activities undertaken in support of Africa by adding more evaluation and impact assessment. For example, future reports could be supplemented or replaced by an implementation matrix that would clearly indicate planned activities, requests for technical cooperation, implementation rates and assessments of actual impacts on beneficiaries and on broader objectives of sustainable and inclusive growth in Africa. Other relevant topics to be covered could include employment creation, the effects of global crises on economic growth in Africa, mechanisms for reducing vulnerability to external shocks, economic transformation and deeper integration of Africa into the global economy.

18. Some participants recommended that UNCTAD should enhance its engagement with the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency on a variety of issues through avenues such as joint research work and the co-hosting of expert group meetings. New areas of cooperation between the two institutions should be explored.

19. Some representatives called upon the secretariat to support Africa in attracting foreign direct investment in non-extractive sectors. In this regard, it was encouraging that intra-African investments were rising, given that they were more targeted at non-extractive sectors such as manufacturing. Finding ways to increase such investments in the agriculture sector would contribute to making Africa self-sufficient in food production, reducing the devastating effects food crises had had on the region in the last few years. Others suggested that UNCTAD should support African countries in the area of international and bilateral investment negotiations and enhance its coordination with the African Platform for Development Effectiveness set up by the African Union and NEPAD in 2011.

20. Several delegates commended the *Economic Development in Africa Report 2011 — Fostering Industrial Development in Africa in the New Global Environment* for its quality and timeliness. It was important that UNCTAD support African countries in implementing industrial policies, including those suggested in the report, in order to promote industrial development in the region. Other areas where

increased support from UNCTAD was sought included information and communications technologies development, private-sector development, nurturing of developmental States, food security, the process of accession to the World Trade Organization and more analytical work on regional economic integration.

21. A number of delegates appreciated the role played by UNCTAD in collaboration with the African Union in supporting the organization of an African Trade Ministers Meeting on the implementation of the African Union's Action Plan on Boosting Intra-African Trade during UNCTAD XIII in Doha, Qatar. They encouraged UNCTAD to continue working with the African Union and subregional institutions to implement the Plan.

22. Some delegates said that there should be much closer cooperation between UNCTAD, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission in the implementation of Africa's development agenda. UNCTAD should continue providing its technical assistance and extend coverage to more countries. Programmes such as TrainForTrade, the Automated System for Customs Data, the Debt Management and Financial Analysis System, and Empretec had proven to be very useful to beneficiary countries.

23. The representative of the European Union indicated that his institution was prepared to actively support African countries in their efforts to improve governance; strengthen women's economic empowerment; facilitate the transition to a green economy; develop the private sector; promote domestic resource mobilization and the reform of tax systems; mobilize public and private funds, including remittances to finance infrastructure; build resilience to shocks; better manage natural resource rents and promote regional integration.

24. In order to further improve UNCTAD's work in Africa, several delegates said that there was a need for better coordination of technical assistance activities; further analytical work on issues related to tariff peaks, tariff escalation, value addition, economic diversification and commodity trade; and greater translation of UNCTAD's analytical work into projects that could have a direct impact at the grassroots level. Further, more consensus-building activities specifically targeting the key stakeholders in Africa on issues such as agricultural productivity, energy security, and transport infrastructure should be held.

25. One delegate regretted that there had been a decline in capacity-building activities offered by the Virtual Institute and said that efforts should be made to reverse that trend. Offering e-courses could not be a substitute for the traditional classroom training model, given that most African countries faced challenges related to digital connectivity.

B. Panel session — The New Partnership for Africa's Development: Performance, Challenges and the Role of UNCTAD

26. Under this topic, the following participants addressed the meeting: Mr. Mothae Anthony Maruping, President of the Trade and Development Board; Mr. Taffere Tesfachew, Director, Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes, UNCTAD; Mr. Ibrahim Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer, NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency; Ms. Justina Dugbazah, Gender Issues, NEPAD; Mr. Ousmane Djibo, Sustainable Land and Water Management, NEPAD;

Mr. Emmanuel Nnadozie, Director, Economic Development and NEPAD Division, Economic Commission for Africa; Mr. Kamran Kousari, former Special Coordinator for Africa, Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes, UNCTAD; and representatives of the following countries: Algeria, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Gabon, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

27. The keynote speaker recalled that when NEPAD had been launched 10 years ago, Africa was emerging from two decades of a development model revolving around structural adjustment and poverty reduction strategies. This period was characterized by an erosion of strategic thinking in Africa, and NEPAD was Africa's response to that challenge. It brought about a vision of development that sought regional solutions to national problems, combining top-down with bottom-up approaches while rebalancing the roles of the State and the market. Although African countries realized that they faced many development challenges, they had identified agriculture and infrastructure development as their key priorities, treating gender equity and good governance as cross-cutting issues. NEPAD considered regional integration as crucial for delivery of its services; therefore, the key priorities must be regionalized and embedded in national plans. Among NEPAD's innovations and successes was the introduction of a peer-review mechanism that had improved governance on the continent, as well as partnerships with civil society, the private sector and opposition parties in defining development strategies. The speaker acknowledged that many challenges remained. They included political instability and security issues; poor resource mobilization and management; failure to create enough jobs, especially for the youth; weak natural resource governance; and the continent's failure to create a breed of African entrepreneurs capable of creating value within African economies using the continent's vast natural resources.

28. In the discussion that followed, many delegates congratulated NEPAD for its achievements during its 10 years of existence. The outcome of an African initiative for Africa's development, NEPAD was able to surmount a number of challenges in its early years to become a reference for development thinking in Africa. Several delegates highlighted some of its achievements: stronger ownership of policies and priorities by Africans; the African Peer Review Mechanism; renewed interest in infrastructure and agriculture development, as illustrated by the adoption of the continent-wide Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, which had led to an increase in national budgets allocated to agriculture; integration of gender issues in strategic development thinking; better coordination of policies at the regional level; and mobilization of resources for the implementation of regional projects.

29. Some delegates noted that while NEPAD had been relatively successful in carrying out strategic thinking and planning, not enough progress had been made in project implementation, and further efforts should be deployed in the years ahead. They urged NEPAD, in collaboration with UNCTAD and other relevant actors, to take a more active part in promoting projects that addressed some of the most pressing challenges facing the African continent today. For example, NEPAD could help reverse Africa's de-industrialization process; attract back African scientific and technical expertise that had migrated outside the continent; encourage a type of economic growth that created more jobs to reduce Africa's high level of poverty; improve the management of natural resource rents; ensure that Africa became the main beneficiary of its natural resources through, if necessary, renegotiation of investment contracts that disproportionally favoured investors at the expense of

Africans; and strengthen domestic resource mobilization. NEPAD was also best placed to help African countries share best practices in project implementation and policy design.

C. Matters requiring action by the Board arising from or related to reports and activities of its subsidiary bodies

(Agenda item 3 (a))

30. As the sixty-first session of the Working Party had been postponed until 23-25 July 2012, the report of the Working Party would be considered at the annual session of the Board in September.

31. At the third plenary meeting, one representative said that some documents mentioned in the draft provisional agenda of the sixty-second session of the Working Party were not yet available on the UNCTAD website. He urged the secretariat to issue the documents in a timely manner so as to allow groups to prepare for the meeting.

(Agenda item 3 (b))

32. The President proposed that the Board request the extended Bureau to prepare and approve the topics and terms of reference of the expert meetings and to reach agreement on the agendas of the sessions of the Commissions scheduled to take place in November 2012. Once approved by the Bureau, the topics and terms of reference should be issued as a Board document.

33. In view of the differing opinions of some participants regarding the topics, the President at the third plenary meeting decided to convene a resumed session to discuss those issues.

34. At the fourth plenary meeting, two members of the Board requested that delegations meet informally to propose a date in the near future to finalize their selection of the second topic of the second round of single-year expert meetings.

III. Organizational matters

A. Opening of the session

35. The fifty-fifth executive session of the Trade and Development Board was opened by Mr. Mothae Anthony Maruping, President of the Board.

B. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work of the session

(Agenda item 1)

36. At its opening plenary meeting, the Trade and Development Board adopted the provisional agenda for the session as contained in document TD/B/EX(55)/1. The agenda was thus as follows:

1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
2. Activities undertaken by UNCTAD in support of Africa
3. Matters requiring action by the Board arising from or related to reports and activities of its subsidiary bodies:
   (a) Report of the Working Party
   (b) Topics for multi-/single-year expert meetings
4. Designation of non-governmental organizations for the purposes of rule 77 of the rules of procedure of the Board
5. Other business
6. Report of the Board on its fifty-fifth executive session

C. Adoption of the report

(Agenda item 6)

37. The Trade and Development Board authorized the Rapporteur to finalize the report after the conclusion of the meeting.

Annex I

Draft provisional agenda for the sixty-second session of the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD and their financing
4. Evaluation of UNCTAD activities
   (a) Evaluation of UNCTAD activities: Overview
   (b) Evaluation report of UNCTAD's programme on science and technology for development
   (c) Progress report on the implementation of recommendations from the evaluation of UNCTAD's technical cooperation activities dedicated to least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and other structurally weak, vulnerable and small economies
5. Provisional agenda for the sixty-third session of the Working Party
6. Other business
7. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board

Annex II

Draft provisional agenda for the fifty-ninth session of the Trade and Development Board

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of the work of the session
3. High-level segment: Growth with jobs for poverty reduction: What can Africa learn from other regions?
4. Interdependence: coordinating stimulus for global growth
5. UNCTAD's contribution to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs: First progress report
6. Economic development in Africa: Structural Transformation and Sustainable Development in Africa
7. Evolution of the international trading system and its trends from a development perspective
8. Development strategies in a globalized world: reducing inequalities for balanced and sustainable development
9. Investment for development: Towards a new generation of investment policies for inclusive growth and sustainable development
10. UNCTAD's contribution to the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields
11. Technical cooperation activities:
    (a) Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD
    (b) Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people
12. Matters requiring action by the Board in the follow-up to the thirteenth session of the Conference
13. Other matters in the field of trade and development:
    (a) Progressive development of the law of international trade: Forty-fifth annual report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law
    (b) Report of the Joint Advisory Group on the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO
14. Report of the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget
15. Institutional, organizational, administrative and related matters:
    (a) Report by the President of the Advisory Body set up in accordance with paragraph 166 of the Bangkok Plan of Action on the implementation of courses by the secretariat in 2011-2012 and their relevant impact; and the appointment of members of the Advisory Body for 2013

(b) Designation of intergovernmental bodies for the purposes of rule 76 of the rules of procedure of the Board

(c) Designation of non-governmental organizations for the purposes of rule 77 of the rules of procedure of the Board

(d) Review of the calendar of meetings

(e) Membership of the Working Party for 2013

(f) Review of the lists of States contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX)

(g) Administrative and financial implications of the actions of the Board

16. Adoption of the report on credentials

17. Provisional agenda for the sixtieth session of the Board

18. Other business

19. Adoption of the report

Annex III

Attendance*

1. Representatives of the following States members of the Trade and Development Board attended the session:

Afghanistan
Algeria
Angola
Austria
Argentina
Belarus
Belgium
Benin
Brazil
Burkina Faso
Central African Republic
Chad
Chile
China
Congo
Côte d'Ivoire
Croatia
Cyprus
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Egypt
El Salvador
Estonia
Ethiopia
Finland
Georgia
Ghana
Hungary
India
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Iraq
Ireland
Italy
Japan
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Kenya
Kuwait
Lesotho
Libya
Madagascar
Maldives
Mali
Malta
Mauritania
Mauritius
Mexico
Mongolia
Morocco
Mozambique
Nepal
Niger
Nigeria
Paraguay
Philippines
Poland
Portugal
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Serbia
Singapore
Solomon Islands
Sudan
Switzerland
Thailand
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
United Arab Emirates
Viet Nam
Zambia
Zimbabwe

* For the list of participants, see TD/B/EX(55)/INF.1.

2. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented at the session:

African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States

African Union

European Union

3. The following specialized agency was represented at the session:

World Trade Organization

4. The following United Nations organs, bodies and programmes were represented at the session:

Economic Commission for Africa

International Trade Centre

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

5. The following non-governmental organizations from the general category were represented at the session:

Ingénieurs du monde

International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development

Organisation camerounaise de promotion de la coopération économique (OCAPROCE) internationale

Village Suisse ONG

Consumer Unity and Trust Society

6. The following panellists participated in the session:

Mr. Ibrahim **Mayaki**, Chief Executive Officer, NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, Midrand, South Africa

Ms. Justina **Dugbazah**, Gender Issues, NEPAD

Mr. Emmanuel **Nnadozie**, Director, Economic Development and NEPAD Division, Economic Commission for Africa, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Kamran **Kousari**, former Special Coordinator for Africa, Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes, UNCTAD